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ABSTRACT

These course materials provide a starting point for helping students (grades K-8) explore the diversity and richness of the human family. The material is organized sequentially around 20 activities which address seven primary objectives: (1) understanding that differences among people have a positive value to society; (2) understanding that such differences add to the quality, interest, and value of our lives as individuals; (3) realizing that although we are different we have many things in common; (4) understanding that a multitude of experiences shapes each of us into unique people who share much in common with others; (5) understanding that our common values and beliefs are the basis for our nation's strength; (6) enhancing students' sense of self-worth and participation in our diverse society; and (7) introducing students to the nature of prejudice and its threat to our society. The kit contains a teacher's guide with a discussion of the objectives for each group of activities, a description of the method of implementing each activity, a glossary of terms and a short resource list of books and audio-visual materials; and includes student activity sheets which provide information and ask questions. (ETS)

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THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

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Introduction

As teachers, as adults, we have learned to appreciate and sometimes be amazed by the diversity of the children within our classrooms. No two children are ever exactly alike, a fact which contributes to the challenges of teaching. The children themselves, however, may not share the same appreciation for the differences of their classmates. Many times young children feel more secure with sameness, afraid of being different themselves or getting close to anyone who is. This can create problems for children—cutting them off from learning more about themselves and others, closing their minds to experiences that could enrich life and help them function more skillfully in the world. This can also create problems within the classroom. As a teacher you have probably had to deal with the hurt and isolation of children who are labeled as "different" by their peers. Students can be taught to understand that that which seems strange and frightening and different to them becomes far less strange, frightening and different when it is better understood.

The ability to respect and accept differences has a dramatic impact on the quality of life for all of us. This education ideally starts within the home and the school and carries over into larger arenas influencing community relations and global harmony as well.

The purpose of the materials presented here is to provide educators with a starting point for helping their students explore the diversity and richness contained within the human family.

The material for the course is organized into seven primary objectives with activities designed to help students learn through experiences and to apply their experiences to the world around them. While the activities are intended to be used sequentially, the teacher is the best judge of which activities are appropriate and useful for any particular class.

There may be some unfamiliar vocabulary words introduced in this unit. A glossary appears at the end of the teacher's guide.

This kit contains all that is necessary to teach the lessons contained within it although some of the lessons require further research on the part of the students. A bibliography is included if you wish to pursue this subject further.

SECTION I

We share similarities and differences. (Activities 1-4)

SECTION II

We make a "me-bag" to contain things that show our uniqueness. (Activity 5)

Objective 1

To help students understand that differences among people have a positive value to society.

Objective 2

To help students understand that such differences add to the quality, interest, and value of our lives as individuals.

Objective 3

To help students realize that although we are different, we have many things in common.

Discussion

The activities designed for these sections will help students understand that there is not any one "right" way to be a person. Children can learn to discuss opinions, attitudes, likes and dislikes without the expectation that the other person "should" feel the same way. They can learn to feel interested in and accepting of differences rather than threatened by them.

Perhaps most importantly, after completing these activities children can gain new insight into what makes each of them unique, and achieve increased self-awareness about their own attitudes and behavior. The activities are arranged in such a way that children are asked first to think about differences, and then to explore similarities among people.

Method

Activities 1-4 will lead into discussions of how every person is unique, and at the same time, similar to others. Activity 1 asks students to identify ways in which people differ in appearance. Children are asked to evaluate just how much they know about a person if all they know is appearance. After noting the ways in which people might differ in appearance, students begin to look for similarities.

Activity 2 allows students to think about some of their own opinions and attitudes. Depending on class size and maturity, perhaps students could walk around the room and compare lists to really understand that no two of them will come up with the same answers. Students might want to discuss what the drawbacks would be if everyone answered the questions in the same way. After understanding that differences of opinion exist students try to reach an agreement of opinion.

Activity 3 gives students a chance to empathize with how others might feel and to figure out why people might not always act the way we expect them to. The second part of this activity asks students to think of how we might feel the same way about things.

Activity 4 helps students apply what they have learned in the first three activities by drawing pictures of someone they like and someone they fear. In class, children discuss whether differences make the feared person "scary."

Activity 5 offers students a chance to express, through art and symbol, their ideas about who they are, what is important to them, and what makes them unique.

SECTION III

Our lives have many influences. (Activities 6-10)

SECTION IV

Our "me-bags" show us both our differences and our similarities. (Activity 11)

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Objective 4
To help students understand that a multitude of experiences shape each of us into unique people who share much in common with others.

Discussion
In Sections 1 and 2 students have discussed what people's similarities and differences are. In Section 3 we will explore the factors that contribute to being different and being alike. The factors we discuss are family lifestyle, cultural background, differences and similarities of experiences, and our common American heritage.

Students will learn about the varieties of family lifestyles that exist within their classroom. They will become more aware of the racial, religious, cultural and ethnic heritages that help shape who we are. Finally, students will understand how experiences influence our thinking and attitudes.

Method
Activity 6 requires children to use their own personal experience by asking each child to think back to an experience of a "first day." Discussion of this activity will introduce the idea that even though we all had a "first day" we all felt differently about it. This in turn can lead to the idea that while we might be doing the same things on the outside, we may be feeling differently inside.

Activity 7 will help students see that we also have experiences and needs that are very similar.

Activity 8 is designed to help students understand that all families are different. At the same time all families have certain similarities. Both the differences and the similarities are valuable.

Materials Needed: crayons or paint or markers etc. and two sheets of drawing paper per child.

Procedure: Children are asked to draw some sort of diagram of their house, either a cut-away drawing, a blueprint-type drawing or simply a drawing of squares, each labeled as a particular room. In the upper left corner, the child will draw a clock with the time marked in (7:30 p.m. is our suggestion). The child then fills in all the people in his family and where they are and what they are doing at that time.

On the other paper children are asked to draw the family celebration that is the most important in their family—a religious, ethnic, or state holiday, a birthday or other personal holiday. They can draw the decorations of the holiday, the foods they eat, what their families do to celebrate.

After the drawings are completed the children can share their pictures with the class. This can lead into a discussion of family differences and similarities. Differences that may come up are the number of people in each family, the birth order of each student, how families spend their evenings, choices of recreational activities, and differences in what is an important celebration. Similarities that may be mentioned are that all families celebrate certain holidays, that all prepare certain special foods, that members of a family have special feelings for one another.

In Activity 9 children are asked to trace their family history. In the subsequent discussion they should share their research with others in the class, identifying both the differences and the similarities in the racial, religious, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds of their respective families. Again, discussions can center on how diversity and pluralism can enrich everyone, as well as on the fact that even within so much diversity there is a commonality of experience.

In Activity 10 students talk about the common heritage we all have as Americans. They discuss the beliefs and values we all share.

Activity 11 asks students to compare their "me-bags," an activity that will again underscore that we are both different and similar in many ways.

SECTION V
America means many people working together. (Activities 12-14)

Objective 5
To help students understand that our common values and beliefs are the basis for our nation's strength.

Discussion
In this section children will review the ideas that brought people to this country. They will understand that this nation is strong because of the ability of many different peoples to work together when they share common values.

Activity 12 asks students to review the factors that helped shape this country's beginnings. Activity 13 helps students identify and review what some differences are among Americans and then asks them to speculate about why people have chosen to be a part of this country. In Activity 14 students are presented with two stories—one about a disunited group of patrons in a movie theater and the other a story of a unified group of band members. Discussion of the two stories along with the quote "United we stand; Divided we fall" can generate ideas about why it is to each American's advantage to work and share together with other Americans and how problems can be solved by agreement and united action.

SECTION VI
How some people feel about differences is bad for all of us. (Activities 15-17)

SECTION VII
We can help everyone understand that we should all respect each other's differences. (Activities 18-20)

Objective 6
To enhance students' sense of self-worth and participation in our diverse society.

Objective 7
To introduce students to the nature of prejudice and its threat to our society.

Discussion

Our country is founded on respect for and acceptance of differences. Our common values include a strong commitment to fairness, equality of opportunity, and human rights. In these sections students will learn about the danger presented to our country by prejudice, stereotyping, and non-acceptance of difference.

Method

In Activity 15 students put themselves in the position of someone who is stereotyped. They are asked to think of answers that prove that a stereotype is usually false. In Activity 16, students explore the feelings aroused by prejudice. They will get a chance to explore their feelings as members of a dominant group and as members of a group discriminated against. Because the feelings that surface in this exercise can be very powerful, teachers may want to discuss the activity with parents and administrators before beginning.* The individual teacher is the best judge of whether this activity is right for a class and must also judge how much time to devote to it based on the frustration tolerance of students in the class.

This activity requires more time than some of the others in this series. The teacher explains that this activity is to help the class understand what it's like to be judged on the basis of only one thing. The procedure is as follows:

1. The teacher divides the class in half and has half of the group put colorful gummed stars on their foreheads. The teacher will tell the class that people with stars on their foreheads are special and will therefore be treated better than the children without stars (e.g., move to better seats, get called on, receive more praise and attention etc.).
2. The teacher should be the judge of how much time to take for the first part of this exercise and during that time should take every opportunity to favor the children with stars and ignore the children without stars.
3. When, in the teacher's judgment, the children have experienced some effects from this exercise, the teacher will announce that a big mistake has been made. All of the students with stars have to take them off, and stars are given to the children who didn't have them.
4. The teacher passes out Activity 16 and asks the members of the class to fill out part A (for those who had stars) or B (for those who did not).
5. The teacher spends the next period of time favoring the new group of children with stars and ignoring or criticizing the children without.
6. Again, when the teacher feels that enough time has passed, that students are told that a mistake has again been made. It turns out that stars really don't tell which people are special. The teacher asks everyone who has them to remove the stars. Children who had stars the second time now answer Part A of Activity 16. Children who did not have stars this time now answer Part B. By this time, all the children will have been asked to complete both parts A & B of Activity 16.
7. In class, immediately after the exercise, discuss the reactions of each child to the exercise by using the activity sheet and a general discussion.
8. Help students draw conclusions about the importance of fairness and about the feelings that we experience when we are treated unfairly — especially when we think there is nothing we can do about it. Introduce the concepts of prejudice and discrimination.

In the last section of this unit, students are asked to think about ways in which they can promote more understanding and harmony within their own lives. They think about ways to help everyone realize that differences can be good.

In Activity 17, students research the contributions to American culture of people from their ethnic, racial or religious background. Have the class refer to Activity 9 in which they explored their own heritage. Through the use of encyclopedias, the school library, and anecdotes from family members, students can make reports to the whole class on the contributions of their own ethnic group. If many of the children have the same background, you may consider having them do group reports in which each child takes one aspect of the group's cultural history.

Activity 18 asks the children to consider a story that shows what happens when differences are not respected. Children will identify the kinds of discriminatory behavior that happen in the story.

In Activity 19 students will review and analyze the behaviors of the children in Activity 18 and make suggestions for possible changes of behavior.

By the end of this course children should have the awareness and understanding that differences are to be respected and valued. In Activity 20 they are asked to think about one thing they can do to spread the idea of the value of differences to the people around them.

Activity 20 reflects the goal of any educator — to increase awareness and to engender positive behavior and attitude changes. Teachers are requested to allow enough time for each student to really think about a personal change, one that would enable them to help others share the realization that differences have enriched us — as individuals, as communities, and as a nation.

*_The Prejudice Book_. David A Shiman, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1979. p. 143.

Activity 1

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

The Way We Look — Differences and Similarities

From the time we are small, we learn to make choices. We might choose one color as our favorite color. We might choose a bigger piece of cake and not a smaller one. We might like to read stories about pirates and be bored by stories about animals.

We all make different choices because each of us is an individual. In some ways we are like other people and in some ways we are different from other people.

In these lessons, part of the Wonderful World of Difference, there will be many activities that will help you see some ways in which we are all alike and some ways in which we are all different.

One of the first things we learn to notice about other people is the way that they look.

Choose a partner to work with. Sit down in front of one another. Pretend that you do not know your partner at all. Pretend that this is the first time that you two have seen each other. Now answer these questions by writing one person's name in the right blanks.

1. Who has darker eyes? _____
2. Who has lighter hair? _____
3. Stand up and decide who is taller. _____
4. Who weighs more? _____
5. Who has longer hair? _____
6. Who has darker skin? _____
7. Who has more freckles? _____

8. Who has bigger feet? _____

9. Describe the clothes that each of you is wearing. _____

_____

_____

Now you know a lot about the way your partner looks. Still pretend that you don't know anything else about your partner. Can you decide whether you like your partner or not just by answering the questions on this sheet?

We learn that we are different in appearance. Look carefully at your partner again. Now name three ways that the two of you are the same in the way you look. (For example, "We both have eyelashes.").

_____

_____

_____

Activity 2

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

The Way We Feel — Differences and Similarities

We have learned that in some ways we all look different. In this lesson we learn that we all feel differently about some things. We like some things and don't like others. These likes and dislikes are called our opinions. We may share some of the same opinions but it would be a real surprise to find two people with exactly the same opinion about everything.

These questions have no right or wrong answer. They are questions about your opinions. Some of your opinions you might know right away. Others you might have to think about longer. Take some time right now to fill in these blanks.

1. My favorite dinner is _____

2. After school, I most like to _____

3. My favorite day of the week is _____

   because _____

4. The clothes I like best are _____

5. If I could have one wish it would be _____

6. One thing that I always try to get out of doing is _____

   _____

7. One show I like on TV is _____

8. I like to read stories about _____

9. When I get older I want to be _____

_____

10. A pet I would like to have is a _____

When you are done with these questions you can compare your answers with those of classmates. Did anybody else answer exactly the same as you?

We learn that we might have different opinions about things. Now we will learn that we can have the same opinions about some things. Make groups of four people. Try to agree on one thing that would make all four of you happy. Then try to agree on one thing that would make all of you sad.

Activity 3

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

The Way We Act — Differences and Similarities

We look different. We feel different. And sometimes we act differently from other people. Have you ever told someone something that you thought would make them happy and instead they acted mad?

Sometimes it is hard to understand the way people act. But if we remember that each person is unique we know that they might feel differently inside than we do.

We all behave differently than people expect from time to time.

This is a chance for you to use your imagination to figure out why people might act in ways we don't expect. There are no right or wrong answers. Try to ask yourself why the children in the stories might act the way they do.

Story One

Joe, age eleven, is having a camping-out party for his birthday and is allowed to invite ten friends. He invites his friends from school but two days before the party one of them gets sick and can't come. Joe decides to invite Bob, a new boy in the class. Joe thinks that Bob might like the chance to make friends with the other boys. Joe knows that no one in the class has tried to get to know Bob since he has been in class.

To Joe's surprise, when he invites Bob, Bob walks away and says angrily, "I wouldn't come to your party if you paid me!"

What do you think might cause Bob to act like that? How do you think Joe expected him to act?

_____

_____

_____

Story Two

Helen is 12. She is the oldest in her family and has two younger sisters. One evening her parents call the three girls together and with much excitement announce, "We have wonderful news! We're very happy and we know you will be too! We're going to have another baby in the family!" Helen's two younger sisters jump up and down with excitement but Helen is not happy. In fact she is so upset that she runs to her room and cries.

What do you think might be causing Helen to act in such an upset way?

After you have imagined some reasons why Bob and Helen might feel the way they do, meet together in groups of four to discuss your answers.

We learned that people can act and feel differently than we expect. We learned that not everyone feels the same way about things. But there are many things about which we do feel the same way. There are times when we know how another person feels because we feel that way ourselves. In your group of four, come up with one reason that you can all agree on why you would definitely stop being someone's best friend.

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Activity 4

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Sometimes We Feel Afraid of Difference

Even though we have many ways in which we are both alike and different, sometimes differences seem strange or frightening to us. This can happen if we don't understand the difference or if we are not used to seeing differences.

Draw a picture of someone you like

Draw a picture of someone you are afraid of

1. How is the person you like the same as you? How is he or she different?

2. How is the person you fear the same as you? How is he or she different?

3. What is scary about the person you are afraid of?

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If you need more room for your answers, turn this page over or write on a separate sheet of paper.

Activity 5

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We Make a "Me-Bag"

People have always used art and stories and music and dress to say things about what makes them special. When we see or hear certain things we think of certain people. For example, who do you think of when you hear about a cherry tree, a white wig, and a dollar bill? If you said George Washington, you were right because those three things all have to do with Washington. Because of the stories and pictures we have about him, we know who he was and what made him special.

All of us, whether we are famous or not, have events and things in our life that are important to us and make us special.

This next activity will help us think about and collect some of the things that make us unique.

Materials Needed

A brown paper grocery bag. Decorating supplies such as paint, crayons, glitter, glue, yarn, colored paper, scissors, etc.

What to Do

You are going to decorate and fill up a bag that will contain things that say something about who you are.

Step 1

Decorate the outside of your bag however you choose. Make it as plain or as fancy as you like. Every bag will be as different as every person is.

Step 2

Over the time that we study this unit, you will add things to your bag. All of these things together will give a picture of who you are. For example, some people might use family pictures or a picture of their favorite food. Maybe you want to add a

shell you found during a vacation on the beach. You could put in a story that you have written or a gift that meant a lot to you or a card that someone sent you. Maybe you like boats. Since you can't fit a whole boat into your bag you could find a toy boat or a picture of a boat. You can really add anything you want. The only thing to remember is that everything in the bag must say something about who you are and what you like.

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Activity 6

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Our Experiences and Feelings are Different

In the last activity we saw that our experiences can be very different. In this activity we see that there are many ways in which we are alike. To test out whether this is true, answer the questions in this activity as honestly as you can.

In each pair of statements below, circle the one that you *most* agree with.

1. I feel best when everyone in my family is getting along well.

or

2. I feel best when everyone in my family is mad at everyone else.

1. I like walking down my street talking with my friends.

or

2. I like walking down my street and having a mean dog chase me.

1. I feel good when my Mom asks me to help her carry in the groceries and I do a good job.

or

2. I feel good when my Mom asks me to help her and I don't want to and we have a big fight and I get sent to my room.

1. I like telling jokes to my friends and making them laugh.

or

2. I like pushing my friends down and making them cry.

1. I like eating when my favorite food is served at dinner and we have a good dessert.

or

2. I like eating when all the food gets burned except the lima beans, and the dessert falls on the floor.

If you compare your answers with your classmates you will probably find that most of you agreed with statement number one most of the time. That is because there are many ways in which humans are alike.

Most of us like to make other people happy, to have friends, to feel like we can do a good job. We like to feel safe and we like to feel loved.

Activity 7

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We Share Some Experiences and Feelings

Our experiences and feelings help make each of us who we are — a unique person. Even though people do many of the same kinds of things, our experiences can be very different. An experience is what happens to us. It is also how we feel about what happens to us. This activity asks us to think about an experience that we have all had. We will also think about how we felt about the experience.

Everyone who is in school had a "first day" at school. Think back to your first day. It might be the first day of kindergarten or nursery school or first grade that you remember the best. Or maybe you changed schools one year and had a first day at a new school. You might even choose to think about the first day of the grade that you are in right now. Choose one experience that you remember and answer the questions on this sheet. If you need more room for your answers, use the back of this paper or another sheet of paper.

1. Which first day are you thinking about? _____

2. How did you get to school that day? _____

   _____

3. Close your eyes for a minute and try to picture your classroom. Can you describe what it looked like? Can you remember where you sat? Describe what you wore. Who were the other kids who sat near you?

   _____

   _____

4. Was there anything that made you scared on the first day? Describe what this was.

_____

_____

5. Was there anything that made you feel excited or happy? Describe it.

_____

_____

6. Did you know your teacher before the first day? What did you know about your teacher?

_____

_____

7. Did you have any friends in the class that first day? Who were they?

_____

_____

8. Do you remember if you wanted to go back to school or not after that day? Why did you feel that way?

_____

_____

As you talk about this activity with the rest of your class, perhaps you will discover that even though each of you had a first day, each of you felt many different ways about it.

Activity 8

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Our Families — Differences and Similarities

How do we all become the unique and different people that we are? One experience that makes us different from everyone else is the kind of family into which we are born. Everyone's family is different.

Some of us live with both parents and no sisters and brothers. Some of us have one parent. Some of us have lots of sisters and brothers. Some of us have been adopted by our families. Others might live in foster families. We might live with grandparents or aunts and uncles.

Just like there is no one "right" kind of person to be, there is no one "right" kind of family either. This activity will help us look at some of the different kinds of families there are.

Materials Needed

Two large pieces or drawing paper. Paint, crayons or markers.

What to Do

On the first sheet of paper you will draw a picture of the rooms in your house or apartment. Then your teacher will tell you a time of day and you will draw a clock showing that time on top of your paper.

Next, fill in the rooms with the people who are in your family. What rooms are they in at that time of day? What do they usually do? On the second sheet of paper draw in the family holiday that you think is most important in your family. Draw in the decorations. Draw in the food that you eat. Draw your family and what people are wearing.

When everyone in class is done with both drawings, share them with each other. This is a way to learn about the many different kinds of families there are. This is also a way to learn about the things that families have in common. As you discuss your drawings in class, be sure you talk about how the families are different in what they do and how they celebrate but also discuss the many ways that families are the same.

Activity 9

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Our Heritages — Differences and Similarities

Most American families started off a long time ago somewhere else. Families might have come from other countries and other parts of the world. Even if your family has lived in the United States for many years, perhaps your family has moved from one part of the country to another.

Your family history is part of the background that makes you unique. In this next activity we will explore family history.

What to Do

You are going to pretend that you are a reporter. Choose a family member that you would like to interview. An older relative like a grandparent or great aunt or uncle might remember the most family history. But it is all right to talk with your mother or father too.

Ask your relative the questions on this paper. Feel free to ask any other questions about your history that you can think of. If you need more room for your answers use the back of this paper or another sheet of paper.

1. Who is the family member you are interviewing? _____

   _____

2. What relation is he or she to you? _____

   _____

3. Has the family always lived in this house? in this neighborhood? in this city? in this state? in this country? _____

   _____

4. In what other places have you and your family lived? _____

   _____

5. When did your ancestors come to the United States? _____

_____

6. Why did they leave the country in which they were born? _____

_____

_____

7. To what city in the U.S. did your ancestors come? What did they do there? _____

_____

_____

8. What language did your ancestors speak when they arrived in the United States? _____

9. Does anyone in your family still speak this language? _____

_____

10. Are there special days or celebrations that are very important to your family? What are they? _____

_____

In class discussion, talk about the different family backgrounds. Then look for and discuss those things that all the family backgrounds appear to have in common. For example, every family might have special holidays. Every family might have come to the United States from another country.

Activity 10

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Our Shared Beliefs as Americans

Although Americans have many differences, we share some very important thinking and beliefs. These beliefs are so important that they can keep Americans together as one country.

Look at the statements below, and decide whether or not it is a belief that most Americans share. Put a check mark (√) by each statement that you think most Americans believe. Put an "X" next to each statement that Americans do not believe.

1. Everyone should have an equal chance to be successful. _____
2. The law should be the same for everyone, whether they are rich or poor. _____
3. The government knows what is best for everybody. _____
4. People are happier when they are told what to do. _____
5. People are happier when they are treated fairly. _____
6. Everybody should have the same religion so that everyone would do the same things. _____

7. Voting is important so that we can take part in our government. _____

8. People should be able to live wherever they want. _____

9. If you say something bad about the government you should go to jail. _____

10. People should be able to work at whatever job they can and want to. _____

After you have finished work on this activity, discuss in class the beliefs that Americans share. Tell why each belief is important. How would the United States be different if Americans did not believe these things?

Activity 11

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Our "Me-Bags" Show Both Our Differences and Our Similarities

In Activity 5 we made a "Me-Bag" so that we could fill it with the things that made us special. In this activity we will look in each other's bags and discover which of our things are different from everybody else's and which things we have in common.

What to Do:

1. Make a list of everything that is in your bag.

2. In small groups, and one person at a time, look at what is in each person's bag.

3. Compare what the other members of your group have with what you have by putting a check mark on your list next to whatever you have that someone else has too.

4. When all the members of your group have a turn to show what is in their bags,look at your list again. What do you have that no one else has? What things do you have that other people have too?

A List of the Things in My Bag

Activity 12

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

America was Founded on Respect for Differences

As we have seen, we are all individuals. At the same time we are all part of many groups. We are a part of our family. We are a part of our school. We are a part of our country.

The United States is made up of individuals who are part of many groups, both large and small. We hold some of the same beliefs. We also respect each other's differences.

What do you know or remember about the early history of the United States? For this activity you can use any books that you have that tell you about the early history of this country.

Make a list of all the reasons you can think of as to why people came to this country. If you have a hard time thinking of reasons or finding reasons, think about why people today try to escape from one country to get to another. You might want to think about why you might try to leave a country that you live in and come to the United States.

Knowing the reasons why people came to this country will help you in the next few activities. It will help you understand why Americans share many of the same beliefs. It will help you understand why these beliefs make America a strong country.

Reasons Why People Came to the United States

Activity 13

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

America is One Nation Made Up of Many Different Groups of People

This activity is a game that will help you to discover the kinds of differences that we find among Americans.

If you fill in all of the blanks correctly, you will be able to spell another word by putting all of the letters in boxes in the right order.

All of the words that you need to fill in the blanks are in the list below. Just to make it more fun there are some extra words thrown in, too.

Word List

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC
FAMILY	BACKGROUND
GEOGRAPHY	RACES
OPINION	RELIGIONS
SCIENCE	MONEY

Take the letters out of the boxes and make a word.
Clue: A Place Where Differences Are Respected

— — — — — — — .

1. Catholics, Jews and Protestants are examples of different
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

2. Black people, White people and Native Americans are examples of different _ _ _ _.

3. Having more or less money is an example of _ _ _ _ _ _ _ differences.

4. If I think pizza is the best food there is and you think the best food is broccoli, this is a difference of
_ _ _ _ _ _.

5. Democrats and Republicans are examples of
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ differences.

6. A couple with no children, a single parent with one child, and a husband and wife with six children are examples of
_ _ _ _ _ differences.

7. Ted's great grandfather came from Italy, Judy's mother came from Japan and Bill's family is Native American. These are all differences in
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

Why would all the different groups mentioned above join together into one country? Discuss this in class.

Activity 14

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

The Way We Work Together Makes America Strong

"Then join hand in hand
Brave Americans All
By uniting we stand,
By dividing we fall."

(The Liberty Song, John Dickenson, 1768)

In this lesson we will discuss whether these words still have meaning for today. We will read about two groups—one divided and one united. At the end of the stories we will answer questions about both groups.

An Audience

Rita wanted to see a movie. She and her friend, Sally, went together. They sat in their favorite seats in the back. There were a lot of people in the audience but Sally and Rita didn't know anyone. After the movie started, four more people came in. They were noisy and rude and sat right in front of the girls. Rita could not hear the movie. "I wish someone would tell the manager," she whispered to Sally. Sally said, "Let's just change seats." During the movie, Rita noticed that other people kept moving to get away from the noisy group. Some people even left the movie, grumbling that they couldn't hear. When the movie was over, Rita said, "I wish someone had done something about that noisy group in the back. They ruined the movie for everyone."

The Band

Sally and Rita were drum players in the school band. The band was practicing for the big Columbus Day parade. Most of the kids practiced every day. They wanted the band to be perfect for the parade.

There were three kids in the trumpet section who didn't practice at all. They thought it was funny to hit the wrong notes and get out of step. The rest of the band began to get angry.

The other band members had a meeting during lunch to figure out what to do. They decided to have some of the band members talk to the trumpet players about practicing harder. They decided that no one else in the band would laugh at anything the trumpet players did. And the band members decided to talk to the Band Director about asking the trumpet players to leave if they didn't improve.

1. What was the problem in each story?

2. What did the members of the audience do about their problem?

3. What did the members of the band do about their problem?

4. Which group seemed better at solving a problem — the audience or the band?

5. List some reasons why you think one group worked together better than the others.

6. Look at the reasons you have identified in question 5. Discuss whether any or all of those reasons explain why the United States is a strong country.

If you need more room for your answers, turn this page over or write on a separate sheet of paper.

Activity 15

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Some Think People in Groups are All the Same

One belief that is important to most Americans is that we don't judge people by where they come from or what color or sex they are. We don't look at their family name or what street they live on to figure out what kind of a friend they might be. We try to get to know someone as a person, for himself or herself.

Some people believe that all of the people in a certain group will be the same and behave the same way. Such a belief is called a stereotype. You have probably heard some stereotypes.

Try these:

All girls like _____.

All boys are _____.

All teenagers are _____.

If you said things like "All girls like to play with dolls, "All boys are noisy" and "All teenagers are bad drivers" then you know what a stereotype is. There is practically nothing that can be true of all of the people in a certain group.

Let's look at an example.

"All the Kids in Your Class are Clumsy!"

Suppose that your class has a baseball game with another class at your school. Your team doesn't do well the day you play. You make mistakes. The players trip and fall. Your class loses the game by a score of 12-0. After that game the whole school gets the idea that all of the people in your class are clumsy and bad baseball players. In fact, people in the school begin to think that no one in your class is good at any sports.

What answers do you have for the people who might think that?

Activity 16

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

Some Think One Group is Better Than Another

If you need more room for your answers, turn this page over or write on a separate sheet of paper.

Part A Questions to answer if you had a star.

1. You have been wearing a star for awhile. Tell what it was like to be treated as special.

2. Tell how you felt about the kids who didn't have a star.

3. How did you feel about the way the teacher treated you?

4. How did you feel about the way the teacher treated the kids without stars?

5. How did you feel when the teacher said you had to give up the star?

Part B Questions to answer if you didn't have a star.

1. What was it like to be treated worse than the kids with stars?

2. How did you feel about the kids who had stars?

3. How did you feel about the way the teacher treated you?

4. How did you feel about the way the teacher treated the kids with stars?

This activity is a way of learning about three things that sometimes happen to people.

The first one is ***prejudice.*** *Prejudice means to judge someone before you really know him or her. People might judge someone because of skin color, sex or religion. In class during this exercise, people were judged by whether they had a star or not.*

The second one is ***discrimination.*** *Discrimination means to keep someone out of the things that other people are allowed to be a part of. For example, if a certain group is not allowed to have a job or live in a neighborhood or go to a school, that can be discrimination. It is discrimination if they are kept out because of what group they belong to. You might have felt discrimination when you didn't have a star.*

The third thing that sometimes happens is ***scapegoating.*** *Scapegoating is blaming people for things they didn't do just because of what group they belong to. Sometimes people can become scapegoats just because they are weaker or smaller or different than those blaming them. You will have a chance to learn more about these three things in the next activities.*

Activity 17

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We Can Learn About Each Other's Differences

In Activity 9, you were asked to find out about the background of your family. You found out what country your family first came from. You found out some of the special holidays and celebrations your family has. You found out about the customs of your family.

In this activity, you will try to find out more about the people who have the same ethnic background as you. You will try to find out about their contributions to American society.

For this exercise you may need encyclopedias and other reference books. You may need to use the library to answer the following questions.

1. What is the group you are studying? _____

_____

_____

2. When did most members of this group come to the United States? _____

_____

_____

3. Can you find out the reasons why people from this group left the country they were born in?

_____

_____

_____

4. How did they live when they first came to the United States? What can you find out about how the people lived and worked when they first moved to America? _____

_____

_____

_____

5. What contributions have been made by this group to American culture? To figure this out, find the names of famous members of this group and then tell why they are famous. You may find contributions in sports, government, entertainment, science, art, human rights, or other areas.

_____

_____

_____

If more than one person in the class shares the same ethnic background, perhaps you could divide into groups to work, with each student answering one or two questions instead of five. Make reports to the class about the research you have done.

Activity 18

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We Should Respect Each Other's Differences

Discrimination Hurts All of Us

Tommy West had been in Sally's classes since kindergarten. Sally had to admit that Tommy just kept getting worse and worse.

In kindergarten, he walked with a limp and squinted all the time.

In first grade he came to school wearing thick and heavy glasses. He still could hardly see.

In second grade, everyone knew how to read except Tommy.

In third grade he had an operation on one eye. He had to wear a patch and the thick glasses too. The kids who used to call him four-eyes started calling him three-eyes after the operation. He was terrible in sports and didn't get good grades either.

Sally lived next to Tommy and played with him sometimes, especially if no one else was around. She was surprised sometimes because they could really have fun together. Tommy's father was an engineer and they had computers and computer games at their house. They had a powerful telescope. Sally liked looking at the moon at night from Tommy's house.

Tommy always shared whatever he had. He had a ham radio and Sally and Tommy could reach people from all over the world.

No one else from class ever went to Tommy's house. Once Sally told some of the kids how interesting some of Tommy's things were. Billy Green said, "Well if Tommy has it, it can't be too cool." All of the kids laughed and Sally didn't say anything else.

In the fourth grade, Billy gave a Halloween party. He invited every single person in the class—except Tommy. Sally talked to Billy when she found out. "Why don't you just invite him," she asked. "He probably won't come anyway." Billy made a face. "It's no fun to have a cripple at a party," he said.

Fourth grade was hard for Tommy. The other boys hid his glasses when he was in the shower at the pool. Someone scratched the words "Four-eyes" into his desk at school. One day Billy accidently broke the movie projector while the teacher was out of the room. He said loudly that Tommy must have done it since Tommy was so clumsy.

Tommy didn't come to the fifth grade with Sally. His father said he was going to send him to a different school. Tommy's father looked mad about that. When Sally thought about it later, she felt mad, too.

Here are some of the things that people do when they discriminate. Find examples of these things in the story on this page.

Name calling , Destroying property Leaving out of activities
Scapegoating Not appreciating difference Teasing

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Activity 19

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

What Can Be Done About Discrimination

In Activity 18 we saw what can happen when differences are not appreciated. In this lesson we will explore whether anything could have been done to give Tommy's story a different ending.

Discussion Questions

1. How was Sally's relationship with Tommy different from Tommy's relationship with the other children in his class?

2. What do you think Sally's feelings were toward Tommy?

3. Do you think there was anything Sally could have done that would have helped the other children accept Tommy more?

4. Can you think of any reasons why it might have been hard for Sally to try to help Tommy?

5. Do you think there was anything that could have been done to stop Billy from treating Tommy so unfairly?

6. What might some of the other kids in the class have done differently?

7. Do you know of any instances when people you know were made the targets of unfair treatment?

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Activity 20

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

We Can Help Each Other Value Differences

In all of the activities that we have done we have read things and done things that have shown us the value of differences.

It is important for us to act on what we have learned.

In this last activity, each of us will make a contract with ourselves. We will promise ourselves to act in one simple way that will help to spread more understanding and respect for differences.

Here are some suggestions for contracts you could make with yourself. The important thing is choosing to do something that is possible for you to do. It will help you to choose something that you want to do, too.

Suggestions for Contracts

1. I will eat lunch with a new kid at school.

2. I will smile and say hello to a classmate that I have not been friendly with.

3. I will take these activities home and talk about them with the people in my family.

4. If I have been doing any "name calling" or other unfair things, I will stop.

5. If there is a group that I have an unfair feeling about, I will try to find out more about their contributions to the United States.

You can choose one of the above suggestions or any other contract you might want to think of.

When you have chosen one, fill out the contract below.

My contract with myself is to _____

_____.
action

By _____
date

Signed _____
name

Evaluation Form

Was this program useful to you and your class? The Anti- Defamation League of B nai B rith would like to know how you feel about the teaching materials in this packet. Would you take a moment to answer the questions below and return this form to us? **Thank you.**

1. With what grade(s) and class(es) did you use this program? _____

_____

2. With how many students did you use this program? _____

3. Was the teacher's guide ___ very helpful in presenting program? ___ fairly helpful in presenting program?

___ not helpful in presenting program?

Comments: _____

4. Were the activity masters ___ very easy to use and understand? ___ fairly easy to use and understand?

___ difficult to use and understand?

Comments: _____

5. How would you rate the treatment of the subject matter in this program? ___ thorough ___ adequate ___ too brief
6. As a result of using this program, how many of your students do you believe will change certain of their behaviors or attitudes?

___ more than half ___ about half ___ fewer than half

Comments: _____

7. Do you have suggestions for improving this program?

Comments: _____

Teacher's Name _____ Address _____

_____

_____

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Should you wish to receive your gift before you teach the unit, detach this order form and return it in a separate envelope to the address listed on the back of this card.

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☐ *The Rabbit Brothers*, Robert Kraus (ADL)
A cartoon booklet about twin rabbits: one is prejudiced, one is not.

or

☐ *Prejudiced — How Do People Get That Way?*, William Van Til (ADL)
How people become prejudiced and how it can be prevented. Discusses such concepts as "superior" and "inferior" races.

Send to: _____

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THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

(Tape here)

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